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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

On December 15, 1791, the United States adopted the Bill of Rights, enshrining in our Constitution the protection of our inalienable freedoms, from the right to speak our minds and worship as we please to the guarantee of equal justice under the law. For 220 years, these fundamental liberties have shaped our national character and stirred the souls of all who dream of a freer, more just world. As we mark this milestone, we renew our commitment to preserving our universal rights and perfecting our Union.

Introduced in the First Congress in 1789, the Bill of Rights was born out of compromise. The promise of enumerated rights enabled the ratification of the Constitution without fear that a more centralized government would encroach on American freedoms. In adopting the first ten Amendments, our Founders put forth an ideal that continues to define our Nation -- that we can have both liberty and security, that we need not sacrifice the rights of man for the rule of law.

Throughout our country's history, generations have risen to uphold the principles outlined in our Bill of Rights and advance equality for all Americans. The liberties we enjoy today are possible only because of these brave patriots, from the service members who have defended our freedom to the citizens who have braved billy clubs and fire hoses in the hope of extending America's promise across lines of color and creed. On Bill of Rights Day, we celebrate this proud legacy and resolve to pass to our children an America worthy of our Founders' vision.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 15, 2011, as Bill of Rights Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

[FR Doc. 2011-32054 Filed 12/12/2011 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 12/13/2011]